

EPI Update for Friday, May 4, 2018

Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE) Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Warmer weather means more time outdoors and increasing tick activity putting Iowans at greater risk for tick bites. In observance of the start of tick season, ticks will be the focus of this week's EPI Update. Articles include:

- Three most common ticks in Iowa and the diseases they can carry
- Tick bite prevention tips for patients
- Please educate patients on safe tick removal
- Lyme Disease: The most commonly reported tickborne diseases in Iowa
- Emerging tickborne pathogens
- IDPH launches new public health tracking portal
- In the news: Exotic tick species confirmed to have overwintered in New Jersey
- In the news: Tick and mosquito infections spreading rapidly, CDC finds
- Infographic: Rocky Mountain spotted fever can be deadly
- Meeting announcements and training opportunities

Three most common ticks in Iowa and the diseases they can carry

The three tick species most commonly seen in Iowa include:

1. *Dermacentor variabilis* (American dog tick or wood tick)
 - Most commonly encountered tick in Iowa.
 - Can transmit *Rickettsia rickettsia* (bacteria that causes Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever) and *Francisella tularensis* (bacteria that causes Tularemia).
2. *Amblyomma americanum* (Lone star tick)
 - Found throughout Iowa, especially in Southern Iowa.
 - Can transmit *Ehrlichia chaffeensis*, *Ehrlichia ewingii*, Heartland virus, tularemia and STARI (southern tick-associated rash illness).
3. *Ixodes scapularis* (Blacklegged tick or deer tick)
 - Found throughout Iowa, especially in Eastern Iowa.
 - Can transmit Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, ehrlichiosis, babesiosis, and emerging pathogens *Borrelia mayonii*, *Borrelia miyamotoi* and Powassan disease.

For more information on the vectors and specific symptoms of various tickborne diseases, visit www.cdc.gov/ticks/diseases/index.html.

Tick bite prevention tips for patients

Remind patients that the best ways to prevent tick bites are:

- Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter.

- Walk in the center of trails.
- Use repellent that contains 20 percent or more DEET, picaridin or IR3535 on exposed skin for protection that lasts several hours.
- Always follow product instructions. Parents should apply this product to their children, avoiding hands, eyes and mouth.
- Use products that contain permethrin on clothing. Treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants, socks and tents with products containing 0.5 percent permethrin. It remains protective through several washings. Pre-treated clothing is available and may be protective longer.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has an online tool to help patients select the repellent that is best for them at www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-insect-repellent-right-you.

Please educate patients on safe tick removal

Folk remedies, such as burning the tick with a match or covering it with petroleum jelly or nail polish, are not effective. CDC recommends the following instructions for removing a tick:

- Carefully grasp the tick by using tweezers to grip the tick by its mouthparts, which are close to the skin. Do not squeeze the tick's body.
- Pull steadily, directly away from your skin. Because removing the tick's body is your main goal, don't worry if its mouthparts break off in the process.
- Clean the wound and disinfect the site of the bite.

For additional information visit: https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/removing_a_tick.html

Lyme Disease: The most commonly reported tickborne diseases in Iowa

The most common tickborne disease in Iowa is Lyme disease. Preliminary 2017 case counts show 254 cases of Lyme disease were reported to IDPH last year, as well as 24 cases of ehrlichiosis/anaplasmosis and 17 cases of Rocky Mountain spotted fever – all increases over 2016.

For more information Lyme disease, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/features/lymedisease/index.html> .

Emerging tickborne pathogens

Borrelia mayonii, *Borrelia miayamotoi* and Powassan virus are excellent examples of how scientists continue to search for and find emerging infections associated with tick bites. *Borrelia mayonii* was discovered in 2013 by the Mayo Clinic while testing patients suspected of having Lyme disease. It was then found in ticks. It causes a similar disease to Lyme disease, with symptoms including fever, headache, and rash. *Borrelia miayamotoi* was first found in ticks in the Midwest in 2006 and also causes an illness similar to Lyme disease. There were seven cases reported from the Midwest in 2014-2015. Most people who become infected with Powassan virus do not have symptoms, but those who do can have

fever, headache, and rarely encephalitis. Cases have been reported in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

For more information about these emerging tickborne diseases and others, visit www.cdc.gov/ticks/diseases/index.html.

IDPH launches new public health tracking portal

A new Iowa Public Health Tracking portal has been launched at a new URL, making it easier and faster for users to access high quality public health data.

Some of the features of the new portal include:

- Interactive data visualizations.
- An 'About the Data' tab has been added to each topic area to provide general information about the data displayed.
- Sexually Transmitted Disease data has been added to the portal.
- Additional resources have been added to the new site such as "bites" (a data headline) on the landing page of each topic area, training videos, and a News & Updates page.

The Tracking portal can now be accessed at tracking.idph.iowa.gov/.

IDPH appreciates feedback, provide portal feedback at any time at tracking.idph.iowa.gov/Help/Feedback-Survey.

In the news: Exotic tick species confirmed to have overwintered in New Jersey

www.state.nj.us/agriculture/news/press/2018/approved/press180420.html

In the news: Tick and mosquito infections spreading rapidly, CDC finds

www.nytimes.com/2018/05/01/health/ticks-mosquitoes-diseases.html

Infographic: Rocky Mountain spotted fever can be deadly



To view in full size, visit www.cdc.gov/rmsf/pdf/RMSFInfographic.pdf.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

Have a healthy and happy week!

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